

Premieres

Personalities

Portraits

new music concerts

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son

Robert Aitken
artistic director

Norma Beecroft

a portrait



**Sunday, November 27, 1994
8:00 pm Premiere Dance Theatre
Harbourfront Centre**

Sunday, November 27, 1994
7:15 pm Introduction
8:00 pm Concert
Premiere Dance Theatre
Harbourfront Centre

Norma Beecroft

Programme

Norma Beecroft

Images (1986) • dur. 11' ▼

Robert Aitken, flute
Cynthia Steljes, oboe
Stanley McCartney, clarinet
Michelle Gagnon, French horn
Fraser Jackson, bassoon

Hope Lee

Voices in Time (1994) • dur. 17' ♦

Dianne Aitken, flute/ piccolo
Cynthia Steljes, oboe
Stanley McCartney, clarinet
Colleen Cook, bass clarinet
James Spragg, trumpet
Michelle Gagnon, French horn
Lori Gemmell, harp
Joseph Macerollo, accordion
Bill Brennan, percussion
Fujiko Imajishi, violin
Marie Berard, violin
Douglas Perry, viola
David Hetherington, cello
David Lasker, double bass

Programme

Norma Beecroft

String Quartet (1991-92) ● dur. 12'▼

Accordes String Quartet:

Fujiko Imajishi, violin

Marie Berard, violin

Douglas Perry, viola

David Hetherington, cello

Intermission

John Weinzweig

Journey Out of Night (1994) ● dur. 25'◆

1. Night-time 2. Listen 3. Rumours 4. Dreaming
5. Regrets 6. This World 7. It May Be 8. Tango Nights
9. Night Shadows 10. La La La 11. Much Ado
12. You Would Be 13. So Still 14. Behold !

Marianne Bindig, mezzo-soprano

John Hess, piano

Norma Beecroft

Face à Face (1994) ● dur. 8'▼▲

Robert Aitken, bass flute

Dianne Aitken, bass flute

Trevor Tureski, percussion

**This evening's performance is being recorded for
broadcast Sunday, December 11, 1994, 10:05 pm
on CBC's 2 New Hours with host Richard Paul
CBC Stereo 94.1 FM**

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new music concerts presents

Norma Beecroft

a portrait concert

Norma Beecroft, born April 11, 1934 in Oshawa, Ontario, has graced our creative community as both composer, producer, broadcaster and administrator. Her interest in music stemmed from her parents. Her mother Eleanor is an actress, while her father Julian's ambitions to become a composer and concert pianist were abruptly curtailed by an unfortunate injury to his hands. His interest in inventions however led to some early experiments in the development of magnetic tape that would presage Norma's own interest in electronic music.



In her late teens it seemed that Norma was destined for a modelling career, but the pull of music proved inexorable. In 1952 Beecroft joined John Weinzweig's composition class at the Royal Conservatory of Music. Four years later she continued her studies abroad, participating in the summer course at the 1958 Berkshire Music Festival with Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss and subsequently travelling to Europe to study with Goffredo Petrassi in Rome and Bruno Maderna at Darmstadt.

The timing of her sojourn was a fortunate one, placing her at the apex of the renaissance of the European avant-garde. The chance to hear Stockhausen's *Kontakte* confirmed her growing fascination with the new horizons of electronic music. Upon her return to Canada in 1962 she began working in the leading electronic studios of the day, in particular the collection of instruments designed by Hugh LeCaine at the University of Toronto, the RCA installation at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Centre, and the Institute for Sonology at Utrecht, Holland.

Most of her compositions have been written on commission for specific occasions and individuals, among them Ten Centuries Concerts, New Music Concerts, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, the Canadian Electronic Ensemble, the National Ballet of Canada and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Throughout the 1960's Beecroft worked in various capacities for the CBC, beginning as a humble script assistant and rising to producer of such radio programmes as 'Music of Today', 'Organists in Recital' and 'RSVP'. As an administrator, she was president of Ten Centuries Concerts from 1965-68 and was co-founder (with Robert Aitken) of New Music Concerts in 1971; she served as its president and general manager until 1989. She is currently an associate of Toronto radio station CJRT.

Ms. Beecroft has provided her own notes regarding her compositions:

**AMPLIFIED STRING
QUARTET with TAPE
(1991-92)**

*The **Quartet** was commissioned by the Music Gallery with the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council for inclusion in its string quartet series, **Transfigured Night**, curated by David Olds. As the series disappeared from the Music Gallery's programming, the piece remained unperformed until this evening.*



*The work relates to an earlier composition of mine titled **Cantorum Vitae**, which uses the same melodic material. **Cantorum Vitae** (1981) reflected an upheaval in the composer's personal life and the connection to the **String Quartet** represents a happy resolution to her emotional situation, not without its ups and downs, nevertheless. The tape acts as a reminder of that distant past, and is used as a kind of canon to the live string quartet. The electronic sounds were produced in the composer's studio using a Macintosh and a Roland D70 synthesizer.*

IMAGES (1986)

*As with the **String Quartet**, the woodwind quintet **Images** was not destined to have an immediate première. With the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council, it was written on commission from the York Winds, but before it was completed, the*

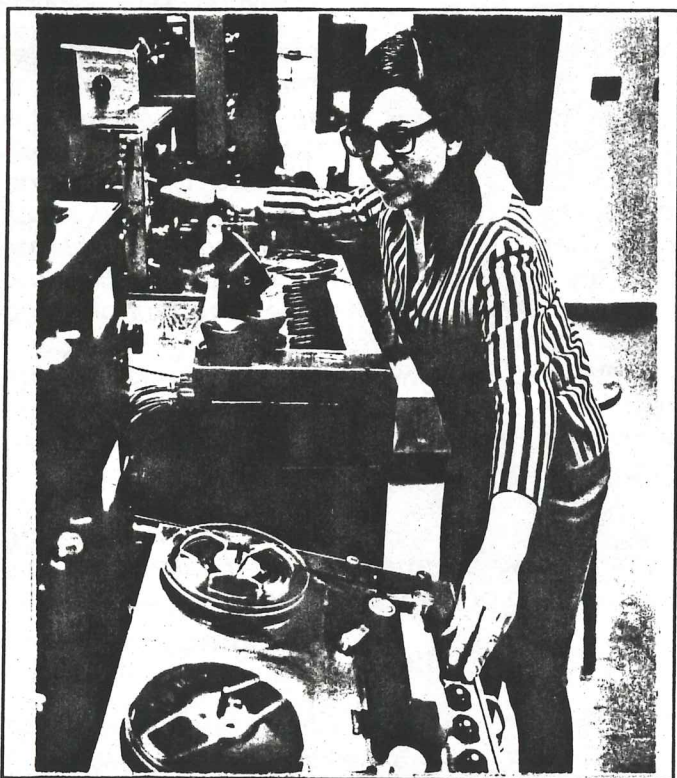
York Winds ceased operations as an ensemble. The title implies a reference to Debussy, a composer who entered my consciousness at a very early age, mainly through his piano works. I have been trying to reconstruct my thinking about this work, somewhat in vain, and recall only that I was having frightening problems with my eyesight, and was unable to complete the commission on schedule. The fact of being unable to see, temporarily, perhaps suggested images in the mind, of sight or sound, but the reference to Debussy is vague. If anything, the word images, in its French pronunciation, appealed to me for its sound alone.

I express my appreciation to New Music Concerts for allowing me to finally hear this composition of eight years ago.

FACE à FACE (1994)

*For the past two years, I have been associated with Toronto's independent, listener-supported radio station, **CJRT-FM**, hosting a series on contemporary music, "**Passage of the Twentieth Century**", and producing two of its annual events, the "**Canadian Composer Retrospective Week**". It was to my surprise and pleasure that management decided to feature Norma Beecroft as the subject for 1994-1995, and, in addition to this honour, they decided to commission a new work from me for this occasion which would be a highlight of the week's presentation of my music. This **Beecroft Retrospective Week** is scheduled for broadcast in February 1995.*

As a tribute to my broadcasting colleagues at CJRT, and using my own system for organizing

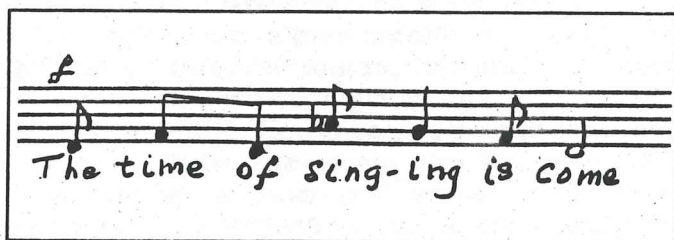


CAM (Finley), EARLE (Toppings), ALEX (Baran) and MARY ALICE (Stuart). These four CJRT personalities are, in order, President and General Manager, Program Director, Music Director, and Chair of the Board. In addition, the telephone number used in CJRT fund raising has also been assigned musical notes. None of the four people may recognize their musical signatures, nor the moods related to each, which is just as well, as commentator Beecroft might become solely composer Beecroft in the future!

FACE à FACE is specifically written for Robert Aitken and his daughter Dianne, with Trevor

Tureski on percussion. The choice of instrumentation was prompted by Bob Aitken, who noted that in all of contemporary flute literature there were no pieces for two bass flutes that he was aware of. He demonstrated that the bass flute, while of the flute family, is a totally different instrument with its own specific characteristics, the most notable being that its strength lies in the lower octave and becomes weaker as the player moves to the upper registers. With this in mind, as well as other techniques possible on the bass flute, and considering that Bob Aitken has always requested 'lots of notes', I embarked on this challenging project.

FACE à FACE was commissioned by CJRT-FM with the financial assistance of The Laidlaw Foundation and the Ontario Arts Council.



JOURNEY OUT OF NIGHT (1994)

Founder of the Canadian League of Composers and tireless advocate of the creative community, **John Weinzweig** has been described by Ottawa musicologist Elaine Keillor in her recent study of his music as the driving force who "established the profession of composer in Canada". His accomplishments are so well known to the new music community that to attempt to recount them all would be mere

window dressing. In any case the composer has warned us not to do so: "*It's Norma's show, after all.*" Neither does he see the need for New Music Concerts to print the text of his work: "*If the audience can't understand the words then I've failed in my setting of them.*"

Commissioned by the Canada Council for this concert, **Journey Out of Night** is described by its composer as "*A monodrama for mezzo-soprano and piano in 14 episodes, each with a single mood of random thoughts, fantasies and fears, that build up to a prophecy of a world doomed to vanish into darkness and stillness.*" These sombre and introspective songs constitute the other side of the coin to the Dadaesque humour of his earlier song-cycles, *Private Collection* (1975) and *Prime Time* (1991). Set to the composer's own texts, it is the fourth installment in Weinzwieg's quasi-theatrical "words and music" project, initiated by NMC's première of *Hockey Night in Canada* in 1987. The principal compositional goals of these intimate miniatures are to ensure the comprehensibility of the text and to establish a balanced dialogue between the voice and the piano.

VOICES IN TIME (1994)

The experience of **Hope Lee** is similar in many ways to that of Ms. Beecroft. Both composers are fascinated by electronic music and both have benefitted from their American and European experiences. Born in Taiwan in 1953, Ms. Lee holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Toronto and both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in composition from McGill University, where her principal teachers were

Bengt Hambraeus and Brian Cherney. Lee has observed how her two years (1981-83) of post-graduate study with Klaus Huber at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany *"reinforced my development to express myself using a very logical, scientific approach, in which each note, each rhythmic value, each dynamic level is tied strictly to the structural frame. Similar to working in an electronic music studio, a tremendous amount of material is collected, then through selecting, filtering, modulating, editing and synchronizing, comes the creation of the work."* Ms. Lee's recent music (as well as that of her husband, David Eagle) may be heard on the compact disc, *e-motion* (New Works Calgary NCD-0294).

Voices in Time, title of the last novel by the late Canadian writer Hugh MacLennan, is one of eleven projected works in a cycle for various ensembles based on Lee's research into ancient Chinese philosophy, poetry and music which she conducted while living in Berkeley, California. As in Chinese music where the sounds of nature were revered and often emulated, water sounds from Kananaskis were recorded, transformed in the electroacoustic studio and integrated into the composition on tape. The tape part, representing the flow of time, was realized at the electroacoustic studio at the University of Calgary. **Voices in Time** was commissioned by New Music Concerts with the assistance of the Canada Council.

Programme notes by Daniel Foley

BIOGRAPHY

Mezzo-soprano Marianne Bindig received her Bachelor of Music in Performance and Operatic Diploma from the University of Toronto. She was a two-time Fellow at the Tanglewood Centre and has also spent summers at the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Britten-Pears School in Suffolk, England.

On the opera stage Marianne has performed the roles of the Mother in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Cherubino in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Baba the Turk in the Banff Centre's production of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, Karolka in Janacek's *Jenufa* with the Edmonton Opera, and Hyale in Charpentier's *Acteon* with Toronto's Opera Atelier. She also created the role of Madelaine in the world premiere of *Into the Light* by Canadian Robert Ursan at Regina's Centre of the Arts.

She has appeared on the concert stage with the Regina Symphony, the Boris Brott Summer Festival players, the Woodstock Strings, and in Toronto with the Aldeburgh Connection, Classical Cabaret with Ruth Morawetz, the du Maurier Young Artist series, John Hess, Preview Concert Series, and recently performed at the Glenn Gould Theatre as part of the "Encounters"/"Soundstream" Series.

Marianne's performances of new music include Birtwistle's *Meridian* under the direction of Oliver Knussen and *Last Tryst* under the direction of the composer, Nag Bhushan. She has been working with lutenist John Edwards for five years on repertoire from the Renaissance and Baroque.

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